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General Assembly
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S/1999/755
6 July 1999

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda item 147
CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION, SECURITY AND SAFETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 5 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on 3 July 1999 concerning Ethiopia's violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 147, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tesfa Alem SEYOUM
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-19997 (E) 070799

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ANNEX

Press release issued on 3 July 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Tigre People's Liberation Front's untenable diplomatic "conduct"

It is to be recalled that in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, and the various agreements between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Ethiopia as a host country, Ethiopia has carried out the following:

- Expelled all Eritrean diplomatic and technical staff in June 1998;
- Picked up all local staff from their homes and streets and deported them;
- Encircled the Embassy premises and residence with a round-the-clock "security" watch;
- Prevented visitors, with the exception of other accredited ambassadors, from entering the premises;
- Denied the Eritrean Ambassador and his deputy freedom of movement;
- Declared Eritrea's Permanent Representative to OAU persona non grata and ordered him to leave the country within 24 hours. Upon his departure, security forces searched the Ambassador and his briefcase at the Bole airport and confiscated documents of the mission;
- On 11 February 1999 armed agents of the Government of Ethiopia forcibly entered the residence of the Ambassador. They ransacked the place and took away employees of the Embassy.

Now, after perpetrating all these crimes, the Ethiopian Government has alleged, in a press statement dated 1 July 1999, that the Eritrean Government has seized Ethiopian Embassy property by "confiscating documents sent in a pouch by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy".

The Tigre People's Liberation Front's intentions are again, thinly veiled. One week away from the OAU summit in Algiers, at which Eritrea's legitimate grievances regarding Ethiopia's violations will be discussed, the Tigre People's Liberation Front is throwing in another decoy. The Government of Eritrea has never in any way hampered the Ethiopian Embassy or infringed on any of its inherent rights. Whereas, in Ethiopia, Eritreans have been denied any consular rights or protection.

Addis Ababa is issuing these claims to further "muddy the waters". No one should be misled. Ethiopia's violations must receive the unfettered and direct attention they merit.

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S/1999/756
6 July 1999

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda items 20, 105 and 110
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 6 July 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea today, 6 July 1999 on yet another deportation of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin by the Ethiopia Government (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 20, 105 and 110, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tesfa Alem SEYOUM
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

99-19990 (E) 070799

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ANNEX

Press release issued on 6 July 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Tigre People's Liberation Front regime resumes mass deportation of Eritreans

One thousand four hundred and ten Eritrean civilians deported from Addis Ababa arrived at the port city of Assab early yesterday morning. The Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were expelled through the Burie front line 70 kilometres west of Assab. The deportees included expectant mothers, children and several handicapped and gravely ill people. A large number of the deportees had lived their entire life in Ethiopia and carried Ethiopian passports. They said they had been arrested and detained for periods ranging between three days and 10 months prior to their deportation.

Reliable sources in Addis Ababa are reporting that the Tigre People's Liberation Front regime is commencing another round of arbitrary arrest and deportation of Eritreans. This group of Eritreans is thought to be only the first batch of some 15,000 Eritreans who remain destitute in Addis Ababa and who will be deported in the coming days.

Many of the expelled Eritreans had been separated from family members who had been deported earlier and said they had become virtually destitute, having been denied employment and, in many cases, thrown out of their homes. They said the situation remains desperate for many Eritreans who have lost all means of income but have been prevented from leaving Ethiopia. Local journalists in Assab reported that seven of the deportees are currently in the Assab hospital recovering from heat exhaustion, dehydration and other conditions associated with the difficult journey.

Yesterday's arrivals bring the two-day total to 3,000. Thirty-one Eritreans were also expelled from Tigray between 23 June and 3 July after having their property confiscated. To date, the Tigre People's Liberation Front regime has deported 60,000 Eritreans from Ethiopia on the basis of their ethnicity.

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Fifty-third session
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General Assembly
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7 July 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda items 38, 39, 40, 67, 74 and 155
OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST
THE RISK OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 6 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its resumed seventy-first regular session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3 July 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 38, 39, 40, 67, 74 and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its resumed seventy-first session, held in Jeddah on 3 July 1999

On 3 July 1999 the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) resumed its seventy-first regular session, which had begun on 12 June 1999 at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates and current Chairman of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

His Excellency Mr. Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed developments with respect to the regional, inter-Arab and international political and security issues of concern to GCC member States.

The Council commended the boundary agreement signed by the United Arab Emirates and Oman on 2 May 1999 as a source of support for the course taken by the GCC and a concrete expression of the ties of brotherhood and affection that link the two countries. It wished the two fraternal peoples further advancement and prosperity under their inspired leaders.

Political issues

Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council reviewed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait. It again expressed regret that the Iraqi Government was continuing to defy resolutions having the force of international law and to reject the initiatives taken and proposals made at the inter-Arab and international levels for efforts

to be made in cooperation with the United Nations with a view to lifting the international economic embargo being maintained against Iraq and ending the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The Council recalled the relevant resolutions of the Arab Summit Conference held at Cairo in June 1996, the statement issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Arab States at their consultative meeting held at Cairo on 24 January 1999 and Security Council resolution 949 (1994). It affirmed that the Iraqi Government must comply with all the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait, specifically those concerning genuine cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross for the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages, the return of Kuwaiti property, and an undertaking to refrain from any act of provocation or aggression against Kuwait and neighbouring States in order to promote security and stability in the region.

The Council reaffirmed its demand that the Iraqi Government should cooperate fully with the United Nations in the implementation of all the relevant Security Council resolutions and that it should take the necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards Kuwait and its other neighbours by acknowledging that its invasion of Kuwait had been a violation of the relevant pan-Arab and international covenants, such as the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League and the Charter of the United Nations.

Recalling the well-established positions taken by the GCC member States and given their responsibilities at the pan-Arab, regional and international levels, the Council again expressed genuine empathy with the fraternal Iraqi people in the suffering it was enduring because of its Government's policies. It affirmed its determination to pursue the initiatives and efforts in which it was involved with a view to ending that suffering, notwithstanding the Iraqi regime's rejection of those initiatives and efforts. The Council also affirmed the importance of preserving the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

<u>The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran</u>

The Council reviewed recent developments in relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the context of the well-known and well-established positions of the GCC States. They were convinced of the importance of establishing good relations with that country based on the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, regard for common interests, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, the renunciation of the threat or use of force and the settlement of ongoing disputes through dialogue and by other peaceful means.

The Council renewed its commitment to and support for the position taken by the United Arab Emirates in its repeated appeals for a peaceful solution to the issue of the occupation of its three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, in order to build confidence and strengthen security and stability in the region. The Council affirmed that the settlement of the dispute would

promote the development and strengthening of relations of cooperation between the GCC member States and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Council heard a statement from the United Arab Emirates to the effect that provocative Iranian intrusions onto its islands and violations of its airspace were continuing up to the present time.

The Council also heard details of the talks that had been held with the Iranian President, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Khatami, during his visits to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, when emphasis had been placed on the importance of direct negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates on the question of the three islands. The Council conveyed its gratitude to Saudi Arabia and to Qatar for the efforts they had made in connection with the talks, and it voiced satisfaction at the views expressed by the Iranian President during the talks.

As it welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to embark on direct negotiations with the United Arab Emirates, the Council decided to establish a ministerial committee comprising Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the GCC Secretary-General to devise a mechanism for initiating those negotiations, so as to resolve the issue of Iran's occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates by peaceful means, and to submit a report on the outcome of their contacts to the Leaders at their next consultative meeting.

The Council expressed its full solidarity with the position taken by the United Arab Emirates, and it affirmed the country's sovereignty over the three islands and the Council's rejection of their occupation.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council reviewed developments in the peace process in the Middle East in the light of the results of the Israeli elections. It considered the possible repercussions of the results for a process that had been faltering because of the policies of the Likud Government and its leader, Netanyahu, policies that had repudiated the relevant United Nations resolutions as well as the agreements concluded and the obligations to which they had given rise. Renewing its total commitment to the principles established by the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, by virtue of which there had been a series of gains and achievements on the road to peace, the Council calls upon the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak, to take the steps necessary to relaunch the peace process and to return to serious and balanced negotiations with the Arab parties on all the various tracks.

The Council urged the new Israeli Government to take action to revive the peace process and to resume negotiations on all tracks. This may be conducive to the restoration of legitimate Arab rights in compliance with the principles of the Madrid Conference and in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978); to the attainment by the Palestinian people of all its legitimate national rights, including the right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital; and to full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including withdrawal from the Syrian Golan heights to the boundary lines of 4 June 1967 and withdrawal from

southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa in accordance with Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and without restrictions or conditions.

The Council condemned and deplored the repeated Israeli aerial assaults that had sought to destroy civilian installations and the infrastructure of the Lebanese Republic, had left a number of innocent civilians dead and wounded and had undermined security and stability in the region. The Council calls upon the international community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to intervene in order to require Israel to comply with the April 1996 understanding and put an end to bellicose practices that are to be regarded as a flagrant violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Council appreciates the efforts made by the co-sponsors of the peace process as well as the declaration adopted on 25 March 1999 by the European Union at the Berlin European Council affirming the unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the option of a State. It calls upon the countries concerned to play an ever more effective role and to urge the new Israeli Government to comply with the undertakings given to the Arab side by previous Israeli governments and to resume the negotiations on the Syrian track from the point at which they were suspended in 1996, as also on the Lebanese track, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and just peace and security and stability for the region and its peoples.

The Council values the positive and constructive efforts of the co-sponsors of the peace process in the Middle East and the continued endeavours of the United States Administration for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. It also appreciates the role being played by the member States of the European Union and commends their declaration of 25 March 1999. The Council calls on the international community and all the parties concerned to intensify their efforts during this important and critical phase to help revive the peace process and place it back on track with a view to achieving peace and meeting the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region.

The situation in Kosovo

The Council reviewed developments in the situation in Kosovo and expressed deep pain at the sufferings, expulsions and killings of the inhabitants of the area at the hands of the brutal Serbian forces. The Council welcomes the recent peace agreement as a first step towards a solution to the conflict and the return of the Kosovar refugees to their homes, an end to the fighting, and the restoration of security and stability and of the right of the inhabitants to live in peace.

Pakistan and India

The Council noted with great concern the military escalation in Jammu and Kashmir involving the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of India.

The Council calls upon the two neighbours to exercise self-restraint and have recourse to reason and wisdom in solving the problems between them by peaceful means and without the threat or use of force, which can only bring them the gravest losses in human, material and moral terms. The Council commended

the Pakistani position, which is committed to negotiations with a view to achieving peace and stability.

The Council invites the United Nations to assume a role in halting the fighting and to reinforce the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The issue of Kashmir must be resolved on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions if peace is to be preserved and security ensured in the south Asia and Indian Ocean region.

The Council urges the two countries to enter into bilateral negotiations in order to eliminate the reasons for the current tension, to step up the ongoing bilateral contacts and negotiations between them and to respond to the diplomatic contacts and initiatives under way, and particularly those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in order to defuse the crisis, restore calm and stability to the two countries and peoples and thus strengthen international peace and security.

The Lockerbie issue

The Council welcomed the suspension of the United Nations sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and it commended the efforts of Saudi Arabia and South Africa to find a just solution to the issue.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council once more called upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council again affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

United Nations A/53/1015

General Assembly

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7 July 1999
English
Original: Spanish

Fifty-third session
Agenda items 8 and 37*
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Letter dated 7 July 1999 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, addressed to the President of the Assembly

As you will recall, the General Assembly, in its resolutions 50/161 and 51/202 decided, *inter alia*, to hold a special session in the year 2000 to review the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and consider further initiatives. The Assembly also decided to establish a preparatory committee of the whole of the General Assembly.

The Preparatory Committee held its first substantive session at United Nations Headquarters between 17 and 28 May 1999. Twelve plenary meetings, as well as many informal meetings, were held. In addition, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/28, the Preparatory Committee established an open-ended working group, which met between 24 and 28 May 1999.

The plenary session of the Preparatory Committee held extensive negotiations on working papers that I submitted in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee, and working papers submitted by Koos Richelle of the Netherlands, Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The working papers contained various proposals dealing with the review and appraisal of the outcome of the World Summit and further initiatives.

The Working Group held negotiations on a series of proposals prepared by its chairman, Ambassador Ion Gorita of Romania, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, relating

* In order for the General Assembly to consider the request, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of item 37 of the agenda of the fifty-third session.

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to the organization of the special session, including arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the session.

In view of the complexity and breadth of the topics that the special session will consider and the diversity of views in that regard, the Preparatory Committee decided to hold further informal consultations prior to its second session, which will be held from 3 to 14 April 2000. In particular, the Committee decided to continue to examine the subject of accreditation and arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session, in open-ended informal consultations that will be held between 30 August and 3 September 1999, with a view to adopting decisions at a resumed session to be held before the end of 1999.

The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee also held consultations on a substantive text; however, the Committee was unable to complete its negotiations on that text at its recent session. As a result of the success of those consultations, which produced a consensus text, the Bureau has requested me to hold a resumed half-day session during the week beginning 12 July 1999.

In the light of the foregoing, the Preparatory Committee requests the General Assembly at its fifty-third session to authorize the holding of a short resumed session in order to enable it to formalize the consensus agreements that have been reached and to finish its work on time. I am firmly convinced that the half-day session will give the Preparatory Committee an opportunity to conclude important negotiations without further deferring recommendations on action, which are essential to its final session in the year 2000.

I thank you in advance for supporting this request and bringing it to the attention of the General Assembly for prompt action.

(*Signed*) Cristián **Maquieira**
Ambassador
Chairman of the Preparatory Committee

UNITED NATIONS **A S**

General Assembly
Security Council

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9 July 1999

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda items 40 and 155
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 9 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to our note verbale dated 11 June 1999 and to the many other plea letters addressed to you in the past on the subject of the Lebanese detained in Israeli-manned detention camps and prisons.

On the occasion of the Lebanese Detainee Day, which will be commemorated on 14 July 1999, Lebanon, yet once more, calls on the international community to intensify its efforts towards the release and towards the ending of the aberrant ordeal of those Lebanese held in Israeli-controlled detention camps and prisons. This persisting Israeli practice constitutes a flagrant breach of the basic norms of international and humanitarian laws and blatantly violates the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

On the subject of this tragic reality, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a plea letter, addressed to you and to the international community by the Follow-up Committee for the support of Lebanese detainees in Israeli-controlled detention camps and prisons, and have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 155, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hicham HAMDAN
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

[Original: Arabic]

Appeal to the international community on the occasion of Lebanese Detainee Day, 14 July, issued by the Follow-up Committee for the Support of Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons

The Lebanese people and those throughout the world who uphold human rights annually dedicate 14 July to Lebanese held in Israeli prisons. We urge the international community and every Government to save the lives of the Lebanese hostages arbitrarily detained in Khiam and other Israeli prisons.

Israel holds 170 Lebanese hostage in its prisons: 128 in Khiam and 42 in prisons inside Israel such as Aqlan, Ayalan and Nafha. It is also holding 10 Palestinian residents of Lebanon.

Some of those in Khiam have been held there for 14 years. They include Ali Ghazi al-Saghir and Sulaiman Ramadan, who lost a leg in the detention camp as a result of deliberate medical negligence. He is currently facing further amputation, Israel having refused to release him with 10 other detainees exchanged on 26 June 1998.

Riyadh Kalakash, detained since 1986 along with his brother Adil Kalakash, is suffering from a chronic nervous breakdown. When his father visited him at the detention centre on 25 May 1999 he was unable to see his son because his health had deteriorated so severely.

Mustafa Arabiya, detained since 1991, has had several heart attacks and is subject to fainting fits. He has shrapnel in his shoulder. Samir Qasim, detained since April 1989, has lost one eye. Health conditions have deteriorated for many of those detained, including Ghandi Ayyoub, Karam Mustafa, Husayn Aqil and Mustafa Tubah.

Israel throws into its prisons elderly people such as Muhammad Salim Qatibay, 64, Ali Ghanawy, 60 and Abdah Malikani, 70, the only woman detainee. Many of the detainees, such as Ali Mustafa Tubah, Husayn Aqil and Ahmad Sadiq, were under 18 when first detained, and have grown up in prison.

Khiam prison is closed and isolated. Human rights and other humanitarian organizations are not permitted any contact with detainees. Israel, which is occupying Southern Lebanon, manages and administers the prison, and is responsible for everything that takes place there, notwithstanding its denial of responsibility and claim that its client militias control the prison. The detainees held in prisons inside Israel are being held as administrative hostages. The sentences of those held in Ayalon prison were completed 11 years ago. Nevertheless, Israel extends their terms every six months. Such prisoners include Ahmad Ammar and Bilal Dakrub. Some are held without trial and others were subjected to judicial proceedings that did not meet even the minimum international standards. Samir al-Qantar, detained since 22 April 1979,

received four life sentences; Ali Balhas received a life sentence and Anwar Yasin was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment.

Some detainees, such as Shaikh Abd al-Karim Abid and Mustafa al-Dayrani, have not been tried since they were abducted, and languish in prisons to which the International Committee of the Red Cross is denied entry. They are not allowed to correspond with their families. The trials are a sham, and there is no difference between those who have been tried, those whose sentences have been completed and those held without trial. They are all hostages. The majority of detainees suffer appalling health and psychological conditions: their families are forbidden to visit them, and they are completely isolated from the world. On 12 November 1997 the Israeli Supreme Court announced publicly that the Lebanese prisoners were hostages and a bargaining card.

Israeli legislation permitting the taking and torturing of hostages is a flagrant violation of international law and is entirely unprecedented. Never before in history has a judicial authority sanctioned the taking of hostages.

Lebanese detainees held in Khiam and Israeli prisons are being held as hostages, in contravention of every international convention and agreement. They are being detained without reference to any law and are denied the most basic rights provided for by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Follow-up Committee for the Support of Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons considers Khiam detention centre to be an international disgrace, and urges the international community to work to achieve the following:

1. The immediate release of all ill, young and elderly prisoners.

2. The release from Ayalon prison of all those who have completed their sentences.

3. The halting of all torture and of the cruel and degrading treatment of detainees.

4. The appointment of an international committee to investigate Khiam prison; the bringing to justice of Israeli officers who have tortured prisoners, and the payment of compensation to and rehabilitation of victims.

5. The contact of all prisoners with their families, lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations.

6. The condemnation of the ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court that recognized Lebanese detainees as hostages and the recision of that ruling as being in flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. The invalidation of the sham trials of the prisoners and the acknowledgement that such trials are unjust and in contravention of international law.

On the occasion of Lebanese Detainee Day, we call upon the conscience of the international community, all Governments and organizations, all human rights organizations and all those who defend the right of the human being to life and freedom of opinion to let out a great cry: close Khiam prison and free all the hostages held in Israeli prisons.

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Advancement of women

Human rights questions

Letter dated 10 July 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the House of Representatives of Chile, on 18 May 1999, unanimously adopted a resolution on the situation of women in Afghanistan. Accordingly, I attach herewith a copy of the resolution, which includes a strong protest against the inhuman and degrading treatment of women in that country, and also calls on the United Nations to intercede for the life, dignity, rights and freedoms of women in Afghanistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 103 and 110.

(*Signed*) Juan **Larrain**
Permanent Representative

99-20612 (E) 200799 210799

Annex

Resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of Chile on 18 May 1999

Valparaiso, 18 May 1999

Resolution No. 228

To H.E. the President of the Republic:

The House of Representatives, at its 66th meeting, held today, has adopted the following resolution:

"Whereas:

In 1996, the fundamentalist group known as the Taliban took power in Afghanistan,

From that time onwards, women have been confined to their homes, required to wear clothing that covers them completely, are not allowed to exercise any occupation or to appear in public unless accompanied by a male family member,

Afghan women are not permitted to be seen from the street, and to this end the Government has ordered the window panes of homes to be painted; women must walk silently and keep even their eyes covered by a veil to prevent them from being seen,

Since they are prohibited from working, women who have no husbands or male family members are dying of hunger or begging in the streets, including some, such as lawyers, doctors, artists and writers, who have doctorates or other professional qualifications,

Afghan women live in fear for their lives, for they may be beaten to death for the slightest inappropriate conduct or for merely leaving a part of their body uncovered; for example, a woman was recently stoned to death by fundamentalists for leaving one of her arms exposed while driving a motor vehicle,

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all persons have the right to a tolerable human existence, including women in a Muslim country with whose culture one may be unfamiliar. Until 1996, Afghan women, as Muslims, enjoyed relative freedom of dress; they were able to work, drive and appear alone in public. Consequently, Taliban fundamentalism is not part of their tradition or culture, but is alien to them and is even regarded as extreme in those cultures where Islamic fundamentalism is the norm,

The United Nations has recently intervened in ethnic conflicts to prevent genocide, barbarism and systematic violations of human rights, and hence it can certainly express its rejection of the oppression, murder and injustices being committed by the Taliban against Afghan women,

The House of Representatives has agreed as follows:

To request you, if you deem it appropriate, to express to the Government of Afghanistan, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, your protest against the inhuman and degrading treatment which the Government is meting out to women in that country;

To request also that, through the same Ministry, you submit a formal appeal to the United Nations to intercede for the life, dignity and rights and freedoms of women in Afghanistan."

I have the honour to draw your attention to the above.

May God be with you.

(*Signed*) Carlos **Montes Cisternas**
President of the House of Representatives

(*Signed*) Alfonso **Zuñiga Opazo**
Deputy Secretary of the House of Representatives